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of every letter, and of every flaw in the stone, are represented with the greatest exactness. These fac-similes comprise both the complete inscription on the top of the sarcophagus, and the imperfect one which runs round its head. The former measures two feet nine inches from top to bottom, and the sixth line is two feet nine and a half inches in length. The partial inscription is four feet seven inches long: the letters are rather smaller, slenderer, and neater than those of the full inscription.

These fac-similes, exhibiting as they do the very "form and pressure" of the letters traced and engraved by Phenician hands, are intensely interesting.

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## II. IDEAS RESPECTING AN ALPHABET SUITED TO THE LANGUAGES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. By Prof. C. A. HOLMBOE, of Christiania, Norway.

[This essay, with the letter accompanying it, was not received in New Haven until Dec. 1855, having been detained upon the way; which is the cause of its appearing so long after being composed.]

Christiania, Feb. 15th, 1854.

Six months ago, I received from a committee of American missionaries in the neighborhood of Port Natal, in Southern Africa, an invitation to act as member of a committee composed of Professors Salisbury and Gibbs of Yale College, of Professor Pott at Halle, and of one English and one French gentleman, who were not yet designated, to invent and establish an alphabet suitable to all the languages of Southern Africa. The distance of the members from one another makes oral discussion impracticable: the only possible method of contributing anything to the important object will be, then, to communicate mutually our ideas in writing. Accordingly I take the liberty of sending you annexed my ideas respecting a South-African alphabet, begging you to receive them favorably, and to make such use of them as shall seem good to you.

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It appears that those who have written on this subject, are agreed with respect to the following points:

1st. That the alphabet of the civilized nations of Europe ought to be employed for all the sounds which occur in the South-African languages.

2nd. That certain slight additions to the ordinary letters should be employed to express the sounds which approach those of these letters, but are not identical with them.

3rd. That simple signs are to be made use of to express simple sounds, and that accordingly the complex signs which have been wont to be used for this purpose should be avoided.

The points which still remain undecided are :

1st. The form of the additions to be made to the letters which express sounds resembling those of the African languages.

2nd. The form and number of the letters which shall be used to express African sounds unknown to the ordinary alphabet.

In order to make known my opinion with regard to these two points, I will pass in review the attempts of the writers who are known to me, omitting the letters about which opinions are already agreed.

[Here follows, in the original, a table giving the different characters proposed by Rev. Messrs. Schreuder, Krapf, and Grout, and by Prof. Gibbs, to represent certain sounds in the African languages, and likewise those which the author himself would prefer to see employed. The type necessary for expressing the latter not having been provided, it is not possible to give the table here. The signs approved by the author are for the most part those proposed by Rev. Mr. Grout (see this Journal, vol. iii. p. 465, etc.), the following only being exceptions : for the aspirated lingual mutes he would use the Anglo-Saxon characters recommended by Prof. Gibbs (see as above, p. 471); for the click c he proposes a character which nearly resembles z of the common German current hand; for the click q, the same sign with a prefixed straight mark, constituting a part of it; for the click x the same sign, as last modified, with the addition of a horizontal mark across the tail of the letter; for ij, (as above, p. 465, No. 16) he proposes ñ; for the sound of ch in church, c; for j (as above, No. 17), g with a horizontal mark across the tail of the letter; for k or k (No. 20), k with a line drawn at right angles across its lower slanting limb; for k (No. 19), the same letter with a horizontal line across its upper portion; for l (No. 22), l with a wave-line (‘) across it; for l (No. 23), l with two such lines across it; for r (No. 33), r with a horizontal line drawn through it; for s, etc. (as above, p. 466, No. 35), a long s (ſ) with a wave-line across it.]

It is to be hoped that the South-Africans will some day rise high enough in the scale of civilization to be able to write their languages : and therefore, in constructing an alphabet for them, we must not lose sight of the fact that it is intended as well for writing as for printing : the letters ought, then, to have such forms that they may flow easily from the pen, and connect without difficulty with one another. But this is a quality which is wanting in the signs for the

clicks proposed by Rev. Mr. Schreuder [see as above, p. 436], and by Prof. Gibbs [do., p. 472], and in the Arabic letters suggested by the latter [do., p. 470].

Against the method of indicating the differences of the letters by means of marks or dots detached from them, and placed above or below them, I have the objection to make, that this easily gives rise to difficulties. It is known that in our ordinary writing the dot over the letter *i* is often omitted; this is, it is true, but a very slight inconvenience, because *i* is in our alphabet the only letter provided with a dot. But if we take notice of the Arabic mode of writing, in which numerous diacritical points are employed, we see that the omission or the placing wrongly of these points often causes great embarrassment. We see that conscientious writers, in order to prevent misunderstandings, after a proper name, ordinarily describe at great length the mode in which it is to be written. We should expose the Africans to like difficulties, if we should encumber their alphabet with too many points and marks. I regard as preferable lined letters (*des lettres barrées*), even crossed by two lines, if necessary. Such letters are already in use in many alphabets, as the Lettish, the Lapp, and the Norwegian. [The instances cited are necessarily omitted.]

As to the clicks, Messrs. Grout and Gibbs propose four varieties of form for each of them. I do not doubt the existence of that number of perceptible varieties of sound, but I doubt the necessity of making use of so many signs in order to express them all. It is the case in every language that a letter exhibits certain differences of pronunciation, caused by its contact with other letters, but it may nevertheless always be written with the same sign, without leading to confusion. If the varieties of the clicks have this origin, it is superfluous to multiply signs for them. If, on the other hand, there are in these languages words, or forms of words, which would be confounded, if the signs of the clicks were not varied, I acknowledge that it would be necessary to vary them.